

EPA RULE AND BIG STONE PLANT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the President's misguided plan to reduce carbon emissions from existing powerplants, specifically the impact it is going to have on my home State, South Dakota.

Over the last year, EPA has claimed its rule will grant States flexibility to meet burdensome emission reduction targets. However, there is really only one way for South Dakota to meet its staggering target of a 35-percent reduction; that is, by effectively shutting down Big Stone Plant, our only base-load coal-fired plant, which will soon be among the cleanest in the country.

The plant, which provides affordable power to thousands in South Dakota and neighboring States, is nearing completion of a \$384 million environmental upgrade project to meet the EPA's regional haze and Utility MACT regulations. So as you can see, highlighted on this poster by a Watertown public opinion op-ed headline, the clean powerplant would threaten this significant investment.

The EPA has required this nearly \$400 million upgrade—which is more than the original cost, the entire original cost of the plant itself—and is now turning around and saying: That is not enough. We want it shut down.

Let me repeat that. The EPA has required a \$384 million environmental upgrade to make the plant among the cleanest in the country and now wants to put all that to waste. This isn't right, and this will stick South Dakotans with holding the bill.

When the Obama EPA pushes new regulations to attack affordable and reliable coal generation, it is low-income families who take the biggest hit. South Dakotans have already seen their electricity rates increased to pay for that \$384 million add-on, but the Clean Power Plan will limit the ability for this investment to be recouped, and now they will be charged even more.

This is because the Clean Power Plan would require Big Stone Plant to run less, even on a limited or seasonal basis, not at the high capacity for which it was designed and is most efficient. At the same time, the Clean Power Plan would require the plan to run more efficiently to meet strict emission requirements. So, again, we have had this nearly \$400 million investment to make the plant cleaner and more efficient in order to satisfy the EPA, and now the Obama EPA wants to shut it down.

The Obama EPA should not push regulations that result in higher utility costs for consumers, less grid reliability, and fewer jobs. Affordable and reliable energy helps grow the economy and helps low- and middle-income families make ends meet.

Unfortunately, the EPA's rule will only increase electrical rates and hurt those who can afford it the least by forcing our most affordable energy sources offline.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this burdensome rule and to

prevent the serious economic burden it will impose on middle-income families in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, this morning President Obama will be speaking at a meeting of the Catholic Health Association of the United States.

Now, the White House says the President will talk about his health care law. The President has already been spending a lot of time talking about the law. At the G7 summit in Germany this past weekend, the President was asked about the law and what he said is: "The thing is working."

He said: "We haven't had a conversation about the horrors of ObamaCare because none of them have come to pass."

The President must be kidding himself.

This morning, when he talks to this Catholic health care group, President Obama should stop his denial and he should confess the truth. If he gives another rosy speech about the impact of this terrible law, he will be, once again, intentionally and deliberately misleading the people in his audience.

The President should not stand on the stage today and pretend his law is helping more people than it hurts. He should not stand on that stage today and pretend he hasn't heard that his law is causing premiums to skyrocket. He should not stand on that stage today and pretend he has kept his promises about this law. He should not stand on that stage today without admitting his law has cut into the take-home pay of millions of hard-working Americans.

What the President should do is talk about how his health care law has hurt nonprofit hospitals like the Catholic hospitals across the country. That was the subject of a Wall Street Journal article just last Wednesday with the headline: "Hospitals Expected More of a Boost From Health Law."

Now, remember, President Obama said his health care law was going to help hospitals. He said it would help hospitals because uninsured people wouldn't be coming into the emergency room needing free care anymore.

Well, that hasn't happened. Even more people are going to the emergency room today. According to the Wall Street Journal, nonprofit hospitals have seen a huge increase in Medicaid patients—and Medicaid pays only about half of the cost of caring for patients.

The article gives an example of a group of nonprofit hospitals near St. Louis. It has lost about \$5 million as a result of President Obama's Medicaid expansion. That is a big hit for a nonprofit hospital to take. It directly affects hospitals' ability to continue providing high-quality care.

If President Obama is honest today, I would say he needs to explain to this Catholic health care group why his health care law has not lived up to expectations. Is he going to explain why his law is hurting their ability to provide care? It is not only hospitals that are being hurt by ObamaCare, millions of people across the country are seeing the news that their insurance premiums might soar by 20 percent, 30 percent or even more next year.

In North Carolina, Blue Cross Blue Shield says it needs to raise premiums by 26 percent. In Minnesota, Blue Cross wants to raise rates by 54 percent. President Obama spent part of his childhood in Hawaii. One insurance company there is planning to raise premiums by 49 percent.

Will the President explain to this group today why premiums are skyrocketing?

I will tell you why they are skyrocketing. It is because of the cost of all the Washington-mandated services that came from ObamaCare. Another reason costs are going up is all the bureaucracy that came with the health care law.

There was an article in The Hill newspaper May 27 with the headline: "Overhead costs exploding under ObamaCare, study finds."

The article says:

Five years after the passage of ObamaCare, there is one expense that's still causing sticker shock across the health care industry: overhead costs.

It continues:

The administrative costs for healthcare plans are expected to explode by more than a quarter trillion dollars over the next decade, according to a new study.

This is \$270 billion "over and above what would have been expected had the health care law not been enacted."

That is what this study found.

Under the health care law, Washington has been spending billions of taxpayer dollars on health care: \$1 out of every \$4 is going to overhead—not to treat sick or injured people, not to help or prevent disease, no, to overhead. It is the President's law. It is incredible. This money isn't being used to help one sick child, to provide medicine for a single individual, it is overhead.

As one of the study's authors put it, the money "is just going to bureaucracy." According to this study, this works out to \$1,375 per newly insured person per year under Obama's health care law. Now, of course, people's premiums are going through the roof. The health care law created or raised 20 different taxes.

Maybe President Obama today should explain why \$1 out of every \$4 that Washington spends on health care should go to bureaucracy instead of caring for patients. The President's health care law is hurting hard-working American families who are going to have to pay premiums of 40 to 50 percent more next year. It is hurting the hospitals that are supposed to provide